(c) The excavation cost of gold depends upon the metallurgy of the deposit and the depth of the ore body.

(d) As per new Mineral Policy and amended Mines and Minerals (Regulation & Development) Act, 1957 permits the exploitation of gold by the private sector.

Exploration of gold in Hutti Mines in Karnataka

1822. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Geological Programming Board has abandoned exploration of large-scale reserves of Gold in Hutti Mines area of Raichur District of Karnataka and if so, the reasons therefor;

(b) whether experts and professionals have opined that about 650 tonnes of Gold could be recovered from five square kilometers block where mining is currently underway; and

(c) whether the Central Government propose to make a scientific attempt to determine the extent of resources while dismissing claims about such deposits?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI BALRAM SINGH YADAV). (a) No, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir. The President, Geological Society of India and retired Managing Director, Hutti Gold Mines Ltd. have opined that Hutti Gold Mines area has reserves of 658 tonnes of gold out of which 44 tonnes has been extracted.

(c) The Hutti Gold Mines area is already leased to the Hutti Gold Mines Limited. There is no proposal of exploration of gold in the leased area unless requested by the lessee.

News report on inisible gold in Kolar

1823. SHRI G. Y. KRISHNAN: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item captioned "Invisible gold to put new shine on Kolar's fortunes" appearing in the 'Business Standard' New Delhi dated the 28th December, 1994;

(b) if so, the details of the matter reported therein; and

(c) what action has been or is being taken by Government to locate 'invisible gold'?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI BALRAM SINGH YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The association of gold with arsenopyrite is well-known and this association was used as pathfinder for location of 'free' gold. The mining activity in Kolar Gold Fields (K.G.F.) is restricted at present to 'free' gold. Bharat Gold Mines Ltd. (BGML) is in touch with the Scientists of the department of Geology, Karnataka University, Dharwar to know the details of their work on 'invisible gold' in Gadag gold field. However, BGML has neither received nor discussed any proposal of 'Wiluna Mining Operations (WMO) to mine 'invisible gold' in K.G.F.

Foreign Assistance for Mineral Exploration

1824. SHRI S. AUSTIN: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether foreign assistance is being sought for mineral exploration in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the steps proposed to attract foreign investments in the mineral sector;